

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KATHMA 00360 280746Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 CCO-00 ES-01 /012 W
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O 280504Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7304

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 0360

STADIS//////////

NEA ONLY FOR KUX FROM EAVES

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINT, NP
SUBJ: INQUIRY RE RISHEIESH SHAH

1. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN, OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT RISHIKESH SHAH WOULD NOT BE IN JEOPARDY SHOULD HE RETURN TO NEPAL AT CONCLUSION OF HIS WOODROW WILSON FELLOWSHIP. PHAH WAS ARRESTED IN 1975 AND AFTER A FEW DAYS OF DETENTION, WAS RELEASED AND GIVEN A PASSPORT TO US. HIS MOST RECENT BOOK ON THE PANCHYAY SYSTEM, ALTHOUGH PUBLISHED IN INDIA, IS STILL AVAILABLE IN BOOKSTORE HERE. HE IS CLEARLY NOT A FAVORITE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THE ARRESTS IN CONJUNCTION WITH KOIRALA'S RETURN (EXCEPT FOR KOIRALA HIMSELF AND GANESHPAN SINGH HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO LOW LEVEL WORKERS CAUGHT DISTRIBUTING PAMPHLETS. SHAH, FURTHERMORE, IS WELL KNOWN FIGURE ABROAD AND ACTIVIST IN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND HIS ARREST AT THIS TIME WOULD SEEMINGLY CREATE UNWANTED PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT WHICH IS ANXIOUS TO PLAY KOIRAL AFFAIR IN AS LOW KEY AS POSSIBLE. SHAH HAS BEEN OUT OF AREA SINCE 1975 AND, ASSUMING HE HAS NOT BEEN ACTIVE IN CONGRESS PARTY AFFAIRS FROM WASHINGTON END, HE IS PRESUMABLY PRETTY FAR
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REMOVED FROM CURRENT FRACAS. WE UNDERSTAND HE ALSO CONTINUES TO BE RECEIVED AT NEPALESE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. BASED ON THESE CONSIDERATIONS, WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK THAT RISHIKESH IS EXAGGERATING SOMEWHAT THE DANGER TO HIS PERSON SHOULD HE COME BACK. MOREOVER, HE HAS ALWAYS CLAIMED THAT HE HAS A STANDING OFFER FROM INDIAN UNIVERSITIES TO TEACH THERE

AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO REUTN TO NEPAL.

2. HAVING SAID ALL THE ABOVE, HOWEVER, WE DO WANT TO
POINT OUT THAT GOVERNMENT IS MAKING A CONCERTED
EFFORT TO UNCOVER ALL THE EVIDENCE AGAINST B.P.
KOIRALA. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT SHAH
WAS INVOLVED, ANYONE WHO PLAYED AND ACTIVE ROLE IN
EVENTS FOR WHICH B.P. IS CHARGED (BIRATNAGAR GRENADE
INCIDENT, OKHLADHUNGA RAID, ETC.) WOULD BE IN DANGER OF
ARREST.
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